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Management issues: report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013

Programme performance report for the biennium 2012-2013

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present report provides an account of the programme performance of ESCAP for the biennium 2012-2013 as assessed against the expected accomplishments set out in the strategic framework for each subprogramme for the biennium. The programme performance report consists of highlights of programme achievements and results, by subprogramme, for the biennium 2012-2013.

The present report is central to holding ESCAP accountable to its members and associate members in terms of the efficient use of resources and the delivery of mandated results. The assessment of programme achievements and results is supported by information collected from the end-users of the secretariat's products and services through surveys, interviews and evaluations or other reviews.

The present report was reviewed by the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) at its 353rd session, which was held on 24 March 2014.

The Commission may wish to review the present report and comment on the overall performance of ESCAP and its eight subprogrammes. Based on the lessons learned, the Commission may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on future implementation modalities that would improve the effectiveness of ESCAP.

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I. Highlights of programme achievements in the biennium 2012-2013

To address persistent and emerging challenges, ESCAP promoted regional policy consensus and cooperation in order to achieve balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, facilitated the inclusion of regional perspectives into the global development agenda beyond 2015 and improved coherence within the United Nations system in implementing the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.[1] To ensure that all members, including least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries, as well as fragile States, benefit from economic integration, ESCAP provided policy options, analyses and shared knowledge, including through enhanced resilience to economic crises, as well as to natural disasters. ESCAP members set regional norms and adopted frameworks on key social issues including the rights of persons with disabilities, population dynamics and international migration, while addressing gender dimensions. Regional cooperation fostered corporate social responsibility, technology transfer for trade, investment and enterprise development, as well as international road transport. Placing statistics at the centre of inclusive and sustainable development programmes to develop capacities and modernize statistical services deepened cooperation among national statistical systems. To strengthen subregional engagement, ESCAP provided technical assistance to address such issues as the green economy in the Pacific, the transboundary environment in East and North-East Asia, water and energy resource management in North and Central Asia and connectivity for economic integration in South and South-West Asia.

Challenges, obstacles and unmet goals

To be fully effective, mechanisms for regional economic integration, regional policy coordination and multisectoral approaches to address complex

[1] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

challenges across national boundaries need to be further strengthened. Despite the commitment to attain internationally agreed development goals, weaknesses in institutional frameworks and varying levels of development, as well as the limited financial and human resources of member States, affected the design and implementation of policies. Desired outcomes may also be difficult to attain if sufficient consideration is not given to environmental, social and economic sustainability and the removal of institutional and regulatory hurdles.

II. Results achieved in the biennium 2012-2013[2]

A. Executive direction and management

Objective of the Organization: To ensure full implementation of legislative mandates and compliance with United Nations policies and procedures with respect to the management of the programme of work and of the staff and financial resources of ESCAP

Expected accomplishment (a): Programme of work is effectively managed

Statement of accomplishments: As of December 2013, a total of 98 per cent of programmed output had been delivered and 99.29 per cent of the initial appropriation of Section 19 of the regular budget for the biennium 2012-2013 had been utilized.

Expected accomplishment (b): Identification of emerging issues that require attention by member States

Statement of accomplishments: The sixty-eighth Commission session was a game changer because the region came together and spoke in general agreement on how to address challenges related to trade, energy, connectivity and Pacific small island developing States through its resolutions on the same subjects.[3] The sixty-ninth session was the culmination of combined efforts to convert ESCAP into the most inclusive intergovernmental platform for decision-making in Asia and the Pacific to effectively respond to the extensive transformations facing the region. In the evaluation questionnaires administered for the sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth Commission sessions, member States praised the timeliness and quality of documentation. The adoption of resolution 69/1 on a conference structure of the Commission for the inclusive and sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific was also significant in that it provided a road map for further improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission sessions and the conference structure as a whole.

Expected accomplishment (c): Enhanced policy coherence in the management of the economic and social activities of the United Nations

Statement of accomplishments: The Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism improved coordination and coherence across the United Nations system. Its meetings, including one held during the sixty-ninth

[2] Outputs mentioned in the present section are listed in the proposed programme budget submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session (A/66/6 (Sect. 19)). The programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 was approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/247.

[3] Resolutions 68/1 and 68/2.

session of the Commission, which was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, focused on the development agenda beyond 2015 and the Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations. Meetings on the Comprehensive Partnership provided inputs for reviews of the partnership framework and setting priorities for future cooperation. Among the initiatives implemented related to the development agenda beyond 2015 were the publication of *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13*,[4] which was prepared jointly by ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with a focus on the priorities of the development agenda beyond 2015, and a joint agency report entitled "Towards a green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction: An Asia-Pacific perspective",[5] which included a road map towards achieving Millennium Development Goal 1 — to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty through the promotion of the Zero Hunger Challenge[6] in Asia and the Pacific.

Expected accomplishment (d): Increased exposure of the analytical, normative and capacity-building work of ESCAP and increased visibility of ESCAP as the most comprehensive regional platform for inclusive and sustainable development

Statement of accomplishments: During the reporting period, ESCAP continued to play a major role in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic and social development for member States in the region and strengthening their ability to engage with each other and formulate a regional voice in the face of global challenges. The heightened visibility of the organization was evidenced by an increasing number of citations about ESCAP activities and policies in key media outlets in Asia and the Pacific. A considerable increase in the placement of the Executive Secretary's opinion editorials occurred in 2013, compared to those in 2012, especially during the period April-September. During that timeframe, eight editorials were placed in 70 news outlets as compared to five editorials in 38 news outlets in the previous year.

Expected accomplishment (e): Increased timeliness of submission of documentation

Statement of accomplishments: According to an evaluation questionnaire distributed at the sixty-eighth Commission session, member States generally held a positive view towards the quality and timeliness of documentation. In the evaluation questionnaire distributed at the sixty-ninth Commission session, 42 per cent of the respondents were of the view that the pre-session documents conveyed clear messages concerning the issues placed on the agenda and 51 per cent agreed that the posting of documents through the ESCAP website facilitated delegation's review. The Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by

[4] *Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda. Asia-Pacific Regional MDGs Report 2012/13* (Bangkok, ESCAP, ADB and UNDP, 2013).

[5] *Towards a green economy for sustainable development and poverty reduction: An Asia-Pacific perspective* (ESCAP/United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, 2013).

[6] See www.un.org/en/zerohunger.

Members of the Commission (ACPR) provided useful and valuable guidance to the work of the secretariat on a regular basis.

B. Subprogramme 1: Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development

Objective of the Organization: To foster a sound macroeconomic policy environment and enhance regional economic cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in support of poverty reduction and other internationally agreed development goals, in particular among countries with special needs

Expected accomplishment (a): Enhanced understanding among policymakers and other target groups of macroeconomic challenges and policy options that promote economic growth, reduce poverty and narrow the development gaps

Statement of accomplishments: The secretariat's work generated innovative and timely discussions on emerging economic and social challenges facing the region. During the biennium, nearly 800 references were made in policy documents, academic literature, and mass media from findings in the *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific* and its year-end update. Regarding mass media, top-tier media outlets, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Financial Times, as well as a broad array of national media outlets referred to the *Survey*. Moreover, during the Commission sessions, member States frequently referred to the key findings and messages of the *Survey* in policy statements and during round-table discussions.

Expected accomplishment (b): Enhanced regional voice in global development forums and deepened regional economic and financial cooperation to exploit synergies for mutual benefit towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development

Statement of accomplishments: The Commission in its resolution 68/10 on enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific provided renewed momentum to efforts to foster regional and economic cooperation. Pursuant to the resolution, the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and Pacific was held in December 2013. The outcome of the Conference was the unanimous adoption by acclamation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific.[7] Meanwhile, G20 consultations and subregional dialogues also helped promote regional and economic cooperation. The consultations provided an opportunity to strengthen the regional voice in global forums and ensure that all countries in the region, including least developed countries, voice their concerns and priorities. The subregional policy dialogues served as a useful platform for countries to share experiences in overcoming economic crises as exemplified by the meeting evaluation survey results in which participants indicated that the meetings provided good inputs to policy design/debate in their countries, and were effective in enabling them to learn what other countries in the region were doing.

[7] See E/ESCAP/70/7.

Expected accomplishment (c): Improved capacity of member States, particularly countries with special needs, to design and implement macroeconomic and development policies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Statement of accomplishments: Most of the countries in the region, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, have incorporated the Millennium Development Goals in their development strategies. The commitment of the least developed countries to implement the Istanbul Programme of Action[8] prompted the Commission to adopt resolution 68/2 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific Region. Similarly, the commitment of landlocked developing countries to implement the Almaty Programme of Action[9] is reflected in the adoption of Commission resolution 69/2 on the final review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, the strong interest of countries with special needs to have their views reflected in the ongoing debate on the development agenda beyond 2015 led to the adoption of the Commission resolution 69/3: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok Declaration of the Asia and Pacific Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on the Development Agenda beyond 2015.

Expected accomplishment (d): Improved capacity of member States to formulate and implement rural development policies that promote sustainable agriculture and food security

Statement of accomplishments: Good progress towards promoting sustainable agriculture and food security in member States was made through the Network for Knowledge Transfer on Sustainable Agricultural Technologies and Improved Market Linkages in South and Southeast Asia (SATNET Asia) and by building technical and analytical capacity through technical cooperation in the area of food security and poverty reduction. The Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture continued to receive an increasing number of requests from ESCAP members for additional trainings during the biennium.

C. Subprogramme 2: Trade and investment

Objective of the Organization: To promote trade, investment, and technology transfer for inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region.

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[8] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

[9] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annex II.

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement more effective and coherent policies on trade, investment, and enterprise development

Statement of accomplishments: The secretariat worked actively to build the capacity of ESCAP members and associate members in trade and investment policymaking. In that regard, approximately 1,890 participants attended ESCAP-organized capacity-building workshops covering such areas as effective negotiation and implementation of preferential and other trade and investment agreements and implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade. On average, 90 per cent of the participants indicated that they were better able to formulate or implement policies after attending ESCAP meetings. Analytical work and tools, including the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade studies, the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report, the Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Agreements Database and the ESCAP-World Bank Trade Cost Database, the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific guides and the updated Policy Guidebook for SME Development in Asia and the Pacific together provided a solid basis for more effective and evidence-based decision policymaking and implementation.

Expected accomplishment (b): Strengthened regional cooperation and integration mechanisms in trade and investment

Statement of accomplishments: During the biennium, participating States of the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement ratified the framework agreements on trade facilitation, investment and trade in services, and the Standing Committee decided to welcome Mongolia as a new participating State. The Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade and the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific continued to expand, contributing towards efforts to improve trade policymaking. The Commission in its resolution 68/3 set the stage for the development of regional arrangements for cross-border paperless trade facilitation. Both the Asia-Pacific Business Forum and the Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forums provided an opportunity for public and private stakeholders to exchange good practices and develop recommendations for enhancing regional cooperation and integration. The Sustainable Business Network was set up by the ESCAP Business Advisory Council to promote business sector engagement in sustainable and inclusive development.

Expected accomplishment (c): Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement policies and strategies for sustainable economic development and rural poverty reduction through agrotechnology transfer and agro-based enterprise development

Statement of accomplishments: The Asia-Pacific Network for the Testing of Agricultural Machinery made substantial headway in developing a draft work plan and terms of reference following its launch at a regional policymakers round table in November 2013. Regarding the development of a sustainable agricultural mechanization strategy, the following activities were undertaken: the identification of six key areas for information gathering to assess the current status of agricultural mechanization; the ongoing preparation of "Strategy for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and the Pacific Region", a publication to be issued jointly by the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific;

and the convening of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Asia and Pacific in October 2013. Notably, the Forum served as a platform for exchanging information and sharing best practices and lessons learned from implementing various policy initiatives, as well as promoted effective public-private partnership in agro-business development in the region.

Expected accomplishment (d): Strengthened capacity to promote national innovative systems and create an enabling environment for technology transfer to address regional and global development challenges

Statement of accomplishments: Nearly 40 national and regional capacity-building activities were organized in partnership with more than 40 government ministries, national institutions and international agencies. Through a project aimed at promoting a regional network among research and development institutions in the Asia-Pacific region, the capacity of many targeted researchers and research managers of member countries in the area of nanotechnology increased substantially. SATNET Asia programme helped improve food security and nutrition of the poorest and most vulnerable people in South and South-East Asia. As a result of the programme, the rate of adoption of sustainable and productivity-enhancing agricultural technologies increased and was accelerated, thereby improving regional trade of food products. ESCAP assisted in carrying out normative and analytical work by providing technological intelligence in its online periodicals, the Asia-Pacific Tech Monitor and Value Added Technology Information Service.

D. Subprogramme 3: Transport

Objective of the Organization: To promote regional cooperation and integration in transport for inclusive and sustainable development in the ESCAP region

Expected accomplishment (a): Enhanced knowledge and increased capacity of member States to develop and implement effective and sustainable transport policies and programmes, including those targeting the Millennium Development Goals and road safety

Statement of accomplishments: The secretariat served as a key regional platform to promote sustainable transport in accordance with the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).[10] The Programme was adopted at the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, which was held in March 2012.[11] As part of the Regional Action Programme, the secretariat worked with member States to build their capacities in assessing and implementing policies on road safety, sustainable transport planning, and road maintenance. In addition, a regional expert group meeting was held in November 2013 on a wide range of sustainable transport issues, including, among them, integrated urban planning and sustainable maritime policies. Participants agreed to identify and develop strategies for effectively implementing such policies in their countries.

[10] See E/ESCAP/68/9, chap. I, annex.

[11] See E/ESCAP/68/9.

Expected accomplishment (b): Improved capability of member States and international financial institutions to use the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and other ESCAP-promoted initiatives for planning international intermodal transport linkages

Statement of accomplishments: The secretariat's work in developing a third intergovernmental agreement culminated with the adoption of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports by the Commission in its resolution 69/7. The Agreement was subsequently signed by 14 countries during the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, which was held in November 2013. In the development and upgrading of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, significant progress was also made during the biennium, including the preparation of a number of pre-feasibility studies supported by ESCAP for the Asian Highway and selected dry ports. In 2012, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea acceded to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network[12] and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network,[13] and Nepal ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, bringing the total number of parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network to 29 and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network to 18.

Expected accomplishment (c): Increased capacity among ESCAP member States and the private sector to implement measures to improve the efficiency of international transport operations and logistics

Statement of accomplishments: Given the need to provide a strategic vision and common approach to address challenges to international road transport in the region, the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its second session adopted the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport.[14] Among the notable activities in support of the Regional Strategic Framework were: the establishment of the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation[15] in 2012, which has received more than 80 applications for membership; a series of studies on major subregional agreements, which was launched in 2013 under the auspices of the Regional Network; the development of four mutually complementary transport facilitation tools as part of the effort to improve the efficiency of international transport by road and railway; and the holding of workshops to assist member States in applying these tools. In addition, technical and financial assistance have been provided in cooperation with the secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

E. Subprogramme 4: Environment and development

Objective of the Organization: To integrate environmental sustainability in economic and social development and enhance regional cooperation on environment, energy and water resources management as well as urban development, including the application of the green growth or environmentally sustainable economic growth approach, as well as other effective policy initiatives, for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

[13] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2634, No. 46171.

[14] See E/ESCAP/68/9, chap. I, annex I.

[15] See E/ESCAP/68/9, annex I.

Expected accomplishment (a): Enhanced understanding and capacity of local and national governments and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies for integrating environmental sustainability in economic and social development, including the green growth approach and other effective policy initiatives, effective planning and management of natural resources development and gender mainstreaming for poverty reduction and inclusive and sustainable development in urban and rural areas

Statement of accomplishments: Activities, such as expert group meetings, intergovernmental forums and field projects, undertaken during the biennium accomplished the following: enhanced governments and other stakeholders' understanding of the need to integrate environmental sustainability in economic and social development and boosted their capacity in doing this; promoted integrated water resources management and enhanced energy security, including energy access; and supported the development of sustainable urban development policies and actions. As a result of those activities, 20 policy measures and actions were developed and/or implemented in the areas of green growth, integrated water resources management and solid waste management in 11 countries.

Expected accomplishment (b) Strengthened regional cooperation on the development and implementation of strategies for integrating environmental sustainability in economic and social development, including the application of the green growth approach and other effective policy initiatives, enhancing access to modern energy services for all and energy security, improving water resources management and promoting sustainable urban development

Statement of accomplishments: To assist members in efforts to integrate environmental sustainability in economic and social development, ESCAP produced many outreach materials on low carbon green growth, including online training courses. The development and dissemination of these materials to policymakers increased their knowledge of the processes associated with the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth,[16] integrated water resources management, sustainable urban development, and energy security and the sustainable use of energy, and strengthened capacities to implement strategies that integrate environmental sustainability into economic and social development at regional and subregional levels.

Expected accomplishment (c): Strengthened consensus among ESCAP member States on regional perspectives in strategies for integrating environmental sustainability in economic and social development, including the application of the green growth approach, resource efficiency, efficient management of energy and water resources, eco-city development and other effective policy initiatives

Statement of accomplishments: Activities that helped strengthen strategies for integrating environmental sustainability in economic and social development continued to be undertaken through building consensus on key issues, such as the green growth approach, resource efficiency, efficient management of energy and water resources and eco-city development.

[16] See E/ESCAP/MCED(05)/Rep., annex III.

During the biennium, four Commission resolutions,[17] outcome documents from two Committee meetings,[18] and seven consensus documents from the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum process[19] aimed at supporting efforts to integrate environmental sustainability in economic and social development were adopted. Also, much work was conducted to lay the foundation for building consensus and providing member States with the latest research and analysis to support intergovernmental dialogue and preparations for upcoming meetings.

F. Subprogramme 5: Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction

Objective of the Organization: To promote applications of information and communications technology and to enhance regional cooperation for improved disaster risk reduction and management, as well as for improved management of the associated socioeconomic risks, for inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific

Expected accomplishment (a): Improved capacity of policymakers to develop policies and strategies for applications of information and communications technology and for effective disaster risk reduction, including relevant gender dimensions, for inclusive and sustainable socioeconomic development

Statement of accomplishments: Through analytical studies, regional workshops and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues organized during the biennium, the subprogramme supported policymakers in developing information and communications technology (ICT) policies. At the third session of the Committee on Information and Communications Technology, which was held in November 2012, member States and other stakeholders supported deepening regional connectivity through the development of a seamless information and communication space.[20] This led to the adoption of Commission resolution 69/10 on promoting regional information and communications technology connectivity and building knowledge-networked societies in Asia-Pacific. Pursuant to the resolution, regional consultations were held to discuss strategies towards building a people-centred, inclusive and sustainable information society in Asia and the Pacific.

Expected accomplishment (b): Increased sharing among policymakers of knowledge on effective strategies and policy options for information and communications technology connectivity and disaster risk reduction, including those related to climate change adaptation

Statement of accomplishments: Policy options and more effective strategies for member States were deliberated through interactions among policymakers and development partners in ESCAP-organized regional

[17] Resolutions 68/11, 69/4, 69/8 and 69/9.

[18] Report of the Committee on Environment and Development at its second session (February 2012 postponed from 2011) (E/ESCAP/68/10) and Report of the Committee on Environment and Development at its third session (E/ESCAP/70/13).

[19] Five outcome documents from the subregional consultations on the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum; and two outcome documents from the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (E/ESCAP/70/28, chap. 1).

[20] See E/ESCAP/CICT(3)/6.

forums. Through information technology, knowledge products and disaster risk reduction tools related to building resilience were made more accessible, shared and exchanged. In addition, ESCAP publications and printed knowledge products related to disaster risk reduction were made available to targeted audiences during major policy and technical events. Intergovernmental meetings and regional workshops contributed to greater dialogue among member States and provided guidance with regard to priorities and needs associated with disaster risk reduction. Member States acknowledged that through the One UN approach, which was employed in the preparation and implementation of the third session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, the sharing of information among regional organizations and partners was more effective.

Expected accomplishment (c): Strengthened regional cooperation mechanisms in information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction

Statement of accomplishments: Support from member States enhanced the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development. Concerted efforts were made to implement Commission resolutions 68/5 on the Asia-Pacific Years of Action for Applications of Space Technology and the Geographic Information System for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017 and 69/11 on the implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017, and through, for example, capacity-building activities. These activities covered such topics as the main technical gaps in developing countries in space technology and geographic information system applications for disaster risk reduction, research and policy analysis on the application of emerging technologies, timely provision of near real-time satellite imagery to countries affected by severe disasters; and operationalization of the Regional Cooperative Mechanism for Drought Monitoring and Early Warning (the Drought Mechanism). Member States of the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia, established with support from the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries, benefited from it. They reaffirmed their commitment to the system at the first Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Ministerial Conference, which was held in June 2012.

Expected accomplishment (d): Improved institutional capacity of ESCAP member States to use information and communications technology for socioeconomic development

Statement of accomplishments: The Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICTD) capacity-building programmes have been rolled out in 27 countries of the region and institutionalized into long-term capacity-building frameworks in many of those countries. The training content was updated to reflect the latest information and communications technology developments, including the role of social media in governance and development (Module 11). The Centre also launched the "Primer Series on ICTD for Youth" to enhance coverage of ICTD in university programmes and build ICTD capacities of the next generation of leaders. The series was rolled out in 11 countries and two

subregions, and ICTD teaching capacities were strengthened through training of trainers in 88 universities. The Centre also launched two issues of the new Knowledge Sharing Series and initiated Communities of Practice on ICTD.

G. Subprogramme 6: Social development

Objective of the Organization: To strengthen regional cooperation in building a socially inclusive society that protects, empowers and ensures equality for all social groups in Asia and the Pacific

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased knowledge and awareness of social development and population trends, policies and good practices in the region as a basis for effective decision-making by ESCAP member States

Statement of accomplishments: The impact of the secretariat's analytical work was emphasized in the statements of eight member States delivered at intergovernmental meetings. The member States directly referred to the usefulness of the policy options, strategies and good practices promoted by the work of ESCAP in regard to national policymaking and programming. Ninety-three per cent of respondents to surveys conducted to determine the level of satisfaction with the publication *Disability At A Glance - Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific*,[21] *the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*,[22] and the Social Protection Toolbox,[23] reported that those knowledge products enhanced their knowledge and awareness of social development and population trends, policies and good practices. Additionally, ESCAP produced comprehensive analytical studies to address key regional concerns and priorities in the areas of population, ageing, migration, disability, social protection, HIV/AIDS, youth and gender equality and women's empowerment, which enhanced knowledge and awareness and helped build capacity.

Expected accomplishment (b): Enhanced regional cooperation and implementation of international commitments to promote gender equality and social integration of vulnerable groups in Asia and the Pacific

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP served as a key regional platform to engage governments and stakeholders in assessing progress, identifying gaps and building consensus on the implementation of international and regional commitments pertaining to social development. There were nine resolutions, decisions and recommendations that reflected regional consensus, in particular on population and development, disability, HIV, migration and ageing, which exceeded the performance target for the

[21] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.12.II.F.13.

[22] ST/ESCAP/2648.

[23] See www.socialprotection-toolbox.org/.

biennium.[24] ESCAP strengthened regional and subregional cooperation through capacity-building activities, South-South cooperation, reviewing regional and international platforms and agreements for action. Five initiatives were undertaken to establish regional and subregional frameworks for cooperation to support the successful implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022,[25] to support regionally and internationally agreed commitments on HIV and AIDS in support of the implementation of international and region-specific commitments at the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Assessment of Progress against Commitments in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals, and to promote women's economic empowerment.

Expected accomplishment (c): Strengthened capacity of ESCAP member States to manage social risks and vulnerabilities and implement effective social protection and gender mainstreaming programmes, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in society

Statement of accomplishments: As a result of ESCAP capacity-building activities, member States showed enhanced capacity to develop policies and programmes in support of building inclusive societies that address key challenges and priorities in areas of population and development, gender equality and women's empowerment, disability-inclusive development and social protection. In this regard, focused regional road maps and frameworks provided guidance to assist member States in developing policies and programmes to promote social development. Ninety-seven per cent of government respondents attending ESCAP events indicated that the knowledge and policy tools provided were relevant and useful to their roles and work in areas related to population and development, disability, HIV, ageing, migration, social protection and gender equality. At least nine countries conducted follow-up activities to implement policies, strategies and good practices promoted by ESCAP through its capacity development activities.

H. Subprogramme 7: Statistics

Objective of the Organization: To improve the use of statistics for evidence-based decision-making and develop and disseminate quality statistics for inclusive and sustainable development in the ESCAP region

[24] Resolutions 68/6, 69/13 and 69/14; Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development (E/ESCAP/APPC(6)/3, chap. I); Asia-Pacific Input to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development 2013 (E/ESCAP/IMD/RPM/1, chap. I); Accelerating the regional implementation of the internationally agreed commitments to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/HIV/IGM.1/Rev.1); Bangkok statement on the Asia-Pacific review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (ST/ESCAP/2652); and Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (ST/ESCAP/2648).

[25] Commission resolution 68/7.

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased understanding of development trends in the ESCAP region, especially progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, by official statisticians, decision makers and the public

Statement of accomplishments: The secretariat's reporting on the region's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals resulted in more informed dialogues on policy priorities for accelerating progress. In particular, ground-breaking analysis of within-country disparities in health-related outcomes and their drivers sparked debates on the need to better target policy interventions and localize supporting statistics. Moreover, an analysis of disparities based on household survey data deepened the understanding of factors determining the achievement of the Goals and provided impetus for advocacy efforts to ensure more reliable, higher quality and more timely statistical information.

Expected accomplishment (b): Increased access by decision makers and the public to comparable data on key demographic, social, economic and environmental indicators for the ESCAP region

Statement of accomplishments: The importance and relevance of the *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific* as a key reference was demonstrated through extensive online activity. From 6 November 2012 (date of online launch of the 2012 edition of the *Statistical Yearbook*) to 13 December 2013, the online database generated 51,800 data table views and more than 26,100 data table downloads. The most requested tables from 1 January 2013 to 13 December 2013 were those that covered real gross domestic product, population size, exports of merchandise, imports of merchandise and population living in poverty. The relevance and usefulness of individual country profiles was demonstrated by high demand, with the recording of more than 37,000 downloads in 2013.

Expected accomplishment (c): Increased capacity of national statistical systems of ESCAP member States to collect, produce, disseminate and use statistics in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices

Statement of accomplishments: The Committee on Statistics endorsed the implementation plan for the Regional Programme on Economic Statistics,[26] the Regional Strategic Plan for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics[27] and the Regional Action Plan for Agriculture and Rural Statistics.[28] The Committee also decided on direction and approaches to strengthen population and social statistics, environment statistics, the modernization of statistical information systems and statistical training, South-South cooperation, technical assistance, the sharing of experiences and fundraising through a series of steering and advisory groups comprising representatives of member States and development partners. A notable example is the joint development of the Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to

[26] Report of the Committee on Statistics on its third session (E/ESCAP/CST(3)/17), Decision 3/2.

[27] Ibid., recommendation 3/2.

[28] Ibid., decision 3/6.

Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics,[29] for which $2.7 million was pledged to ensure implementation of its training component by ESCAP.

Expected accomplishment (d): Strengthened capacity of national statistical offices in the ESCAP region to collect, produce, disseminate and analyse data in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices

Statement of accomplishments: Through 45 training courses and workshops, more than 800 government statisticians/officials have developed their skills and improved their knowledge in official statistics regarding internationally agreed standards, methods and frameworks for statistical activities in related areas. The quality of training and other capacity development initiatives organized by development partners was enhanced through the contribution of ESCAP expertise in the following areas: economic statistics and the System of National Accounts; agricultural statistics; Millennium Development Goals indicators; sampling methods; population census; and gender, disability and environmental statistics. Through collaboration with the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific in delivering training, statistical training institutes and units improved their capacity to provide quality statistical training to their constituencies, as well as to other countries through South-South cooperation.

I. Subprogramme 8: Subregional activities for development

Component 1
Subregional activities for development in the Pacific

Objective of the Organization: To better incorporate inclusive and sustainable development principles and practices in national planning and policy implementation processes in Pacific island developing countries

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased capacity of Pacific island governments to formulate and implement inclusive and sustainable development policies and practices

Statement of accomplishments: At least eight countries have started adopting the green economy at national/sector levels in the subregion, with the Melanesian economies having their own subregional green growth road map and the establishment of the Pacific Island Development Forum, which is dedicated to promoting a green economy for sustainable development and inclusive dialogue. At least nine Pacific island economies reviewed their national disability approaches and drafted national disability policies, and a Pacific regional disability forum was established to lead the work. ESCAP helped facilitate the Pacific subregional preparatory process for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which is scheduled to be held in September 2014. As a result of this process, Pacific island economies committed to establishing national and subregional mechanisms for accelerated integration and acknowledged the importance of durable partnerships in support of sustainable development. In the outcome document from the process, the Nadi Outcome Document, the human dimensions of climate change, including likely impacts on human mobility,

[29] *Asia-Pacific Regional Action Plan to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics 2013-2017: For Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development* (Bangkok, FAO, ADB and ESCAP, 2013).

were recognized.[30] The United Nations is responding to this issue through an ESCAP-led European Union-funded programme on climate change migration.

Expected accomplishment (b): Pacific island developing countries are better able to influence Asia-Pacific regional processes

Statement of accomplishments: Increased numbers along with the seniority of Pacific delegates at ESCAP meetings led to the adoption of Commission resolutions that address the vulnerabilities of small island developing countries. At the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum, which was held in May 2013, Pacific delegates gained support for the establishment of the Pacific Regional Energy Data Repository to support the Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All Initiative.[31] At the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Final Review of the Implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, which was held in 2012, Pacific delegates played prominent roles and maintained a strong consensus on the importance of ensuring the rights of disabled persons. At the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in Asia and the Pacific, the Pacific delegates played key roles in chairing and ensuring easy passage of the ministerial declaration and a bold action plan which, among other things, recognized the need to address vulnerability to climate change, as an integral part of regional economic integration.[32]

Expected accomplishment (c): Strengthened regional cooperation mechanisms and institutional frameworks for the promotion of regional integration and equitable development

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP is now established as a key regional coordinator of sustainable development activities, including, among them, green growth, the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, including the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the development agenda beyond 2015. The small island developing States in the Pacific are seen by many as the best prepared subregion leading up to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and have succeeded in keeping oceans, climate change, social inclusiveness and non-communicable diseases on the agenda and outcomes documents. Pacific issues are more prominent now in Asia-Pacific meetings, as well as in ESCAP publications, such as the *Survey* and reports pertaining to the Millennium Development Goals. The uptake and progress of policy initiatives emanating from ESCAP were accompanied by increased requests and invitations to provide briefs and advice and join working groups and task forces covering a variety of areas, such as gender, poverty and the regional/global processes.

Component 2
Subregional activities for development in East and North-East Asia

Objective of the Organization: To effectively address the priority areas of the East and North-East Asian subregion in the formulation and implementation of inclusive and sustainable development policies for the

[30] See www.sids2014.org/content/documents/233Pacific%20Outcome%20Chairs%20Revised%20Final%20Version.pdf.

[31] See E/ESCAP/APEF/3.

[32] See E/ESCAP/MCREI/3.

achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement development policies and programmes, including those with a gender dimension, that address sustainable development, taking into account the green growth approach and energy efficiency, information and communications technology, disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management, poverty reduction and infrastructure development

Statement of accomplishments: The Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia continued to promote subregional cooperation and integration. In the period 2012-2013, the Subregional Office implemented activities to strengthen capacities of member States in formulating and implementing development policies and programmes on sustainable development, ageing societies, statistical capacity, trade and transport facilitation, eco-labeling, nature conservation, prevention of dust and sandstorms and carbon footprint partnership, as well as the prevention of transboundary air and marine pollution. ESCAP also served as the secretariat of the North East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, an intergovernmental cooperation mechanism comprising six member States, and facilitated the seventeenth Senior Officials Meeting of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation, which was held in December 2012. The outcome of the meeting included an action plan for future activities.[33]

Expected accomplishment (b): Strengthened knowledge-sharing and partnerships among member States, civil society and other relevant development partners to address key priority areas in East and North-East Asia to support the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Statement of accomplishments: The Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia collaborated with member States and non-governmental stakeholders, leading to the formulation of a programme of work to address key priority areas in the subregion. In 2012, many activities were organized in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as governmental ministries and non-governmental organizations, resulting in the launch of the Asia Carbon Footprint Network, which is aimed at supporting low-carbon development in Asian countries. The Subregional Office co-organized the North-East Asia Forum on Trade and Transport Facilitation, with the Greater Tumen Initiative, in October 2012, which provided an open platform to discuss the state of trade and transport facilitation in North-East Asia and identify potential areas to enhance cooperation.

Component 3
Subregional activities for development in North and Central Asia

Objective of the Organization: To effectively address the priority areas of the North and Central Asian subregion in the formulation and implementation of inclusive and sustainable development policies for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

[33] See www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/SOM17_Meeting%20report_0.pdf.

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement development policies and programmes, including those with a gender dimension, that address transport and trade facilitation and water, energy and the environment

Statement of accomplishments: Workshops and training organized by the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia on trade and economic relations strengthened capacities of Afghanistan and countries in Central Asia to address key issues related to economic cooperation and to facilitate regional and bilateral trade. Among the issues considered were barriers to trade between Afghanistan and Central Asian countries, business community participation in the economic development of Afghanistan, employment generation and investments. The Subregional Office organized a meeting in July 2013 on strengthening cooperation for disaster risk reduction in North and Central Asia, which brought together hydro-meteorological specialists and contributed to raising awareness and sharing of knowledge and information in the subregion.

Expected accomplishment (b): Strengthened knowledge-sharing and partnerships among member States, civil society and other relevant development partners to address key priority areas in North and Central Asia to support the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Europe organized the 2012 Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia Economic Forum in November. Based on the theme "Strengthening regional economic cooperation and integration in Central Asia by sharing the Asian experience", the Forum was aimed at examining the role of regional economic cooperation in Central Asia given the backdrop of new global developments. It provided members of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) with the opportunity to learn more about the successes and challenges of regional economic cooperation in Asia, including the experience of subregional organizations, such as ASEAN.

Component 4
Subregional activities for development in South and South-West Asia

Objective of the Organization: To effectively address the priority areas of the South and South-West Asian subregion in the formulation and implementation of inclusive and sustainable development policies for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Expected accomplishment (a): Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement development policies and programmes, including those with a gender dimension, that address gaps in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, infrastructure development, trade and transport facilitation, disaster risk reduction, energy and food security

Statement of accomplishments: The Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia actively worked with member States to respond to demand for increased policy implementation capacity in four core development areas, namely growth, the Millennium Development Goals and

gender equality, trade promotion, and regional economic integration, and five subregional thematic priority areas, namely regional connectivity, food security, energy security, disaster risk reduction and productive capacity, and accelerated development of least developed and landlocked developing countries. A range of policy-related analyses and tools produced by the Subregional Office for policymakers were complemented by the delivery of demand-led and partnered capacity development activities extended to key policymakers and partners in the subregion, such as policy dialogues, expert group meetings, workshops, consultations and high-level policy dialogues with ministerial-level representation.

Expected accomplishment (b): Increased knowledge-sharing and partnerships among member States, civil society and other relevant development partners in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in South and South-West Asia

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP continued to collaborate with development partners and other stakeholders in the subregion. It organized various activities and events, which resulted in the establishment of a highly active knowledge-sharing platform with an active web presence and three knowledge-management tools, namely the *South and South-West Asia Development Monitor* newsletter, a policy-brief series and a development paper series. These knowledge products and tools have boosted the capacity of member States in their efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and inclusive development. An analysis on the use of these products and tools indicated that there was active interest from member States and development partners to partner with ESCAP on policy-related issues pertaining to the acceleration of the achievement of the Goals and inclusive development.

Component 5
Subregional activities for development in South-East Asia

Objective of the Organization: To effectively address the priority areas of the South-East Asian subregion in the formulation and implementation of inclusive and sustainable development policies for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Expected accomplishment (a) Increased capacity of ESCAP member States to formulate and implement development policies and programmes, including those with a gender dimension, that address priority issues in South-East Asia, including in the areas of early warning, disaster risk reduction and connectivity

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP organized a subregional workshop on the institutional strengthening of national women's machineries in South-East Asia in 2012, with the aim to contribute to building the capacity of national officials in advocacy and gender mainstreaming. In 2013, the secretariat provided assistance to Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar in preparing for their integration into the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 and eventual graduation from the least developed country status. Through various forms of assistance, the secretariat helped the three countries mentioned above and Timor-Leste in enhancing their capacities in formulating and implementing development-oriented

macroeconomic policies and in promoting investment for small and medium-sized enterprises, and supported the transfer of improved and environmentally sound modern technologies. Also in 2013, ESCAP supported the Government of Thailand in organizing the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda Beyond 2015. The meeting was the first of its kind in the subregion to consider priorities in the process to determine sustainable development goals.

Expected accomplishment (b): Strengthened partnerships and knowledge-sharing among member States, civil society and other relevant development partners in addressing key priority areas in South-East Asia in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals

Statement of accomplishments: ESCAP supported the implementation of the Master Plan for ASEAN Connectivity[34] and participated in the third ASEAN Connectivity Symposium: Realizing ASEAN Connectivity for ASEAN Community Building and the informal consultation under the ASEAN Connectivity Coordination Committee, which was held in September 2012. During the event, the participants were informed of updates on regional initiatives that contributed to ASEAN connectivity in transport infrastructure and priority issues in transport facilitation. The secretariat also participated in the sixteenth Subregional Transport Forum (STF-16) Meeting: Moving GMS Transport Connectivity Forward to the Year 2022, which was held in October 2012.

[34] Available from www.scribd.com/doc/111869648/Master-Plan-on-ASEAN-Connectivity.